

ScienceBase Categories

One of the central points of tension in the ScienceBase architecture is the aspect of remaining open to many different types of information to meet the needs of science teams doing work and the need for clarity in accessing and organizing information, both on the grand scale of all of ScienceBase and within the context of a given community group. One of the guiding principles for ScienceBase comes from the concept that at some level, everything is miscellaneous ([Weinberger 2008](#)). For instance, one person's "map" is another person's "data."

While there is great need for flexible thinking, humans require some method of organizing and browsing for information, particularly when there are many hundreds or thousands of information sources. This prompted the creation of ScienceBase Categories, a short list of "supertypes" of the information in ScienceBase. Every item in ScienceBase has at least one Category assigned, either programmatically or by human decision. These come from the following list that forms one of the major search facets in the ScienceBase interface. The links on items will take you to a search view of all current items in the category.

- [Collection](#) - An item may serve as a collection of other items. Collections become virtual catalogs in the larger ScienceBase Catalog, acting as service interfaces for a variety of purposes.
- [Data](#) - Any form of scientific data such as a downloadable file or a streaming data service.
- [Image](#) - A ScienceBase item whose purpose is to describe and serve a digital image.
- [Map](#) - Usually a distinct published map product that can be retrieved digitally but may need to be requested from some source.
- [Physical Item](#) - Some type of physical object such as a geoscience sample. May also include collections of physical items.
- [Project](#) - An event-based item that describes project work.
- [Publication](#) - Any form of published scientific information such as a journal article or report. May also include discreet data publications or published maps, but these will usually be cross referenced to data and map types, respectively.
- [Web Site](#) - ScienceBase item that describes a web site of importance to science communities using ScienceBase.

The list of ScienceBase Categories can be accessed through the [ScienceBase Vocabulary](#) in the [Browse Categories vocabulary](#).